

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the Office Action of January 15, 2009. This Amendment is in full response thereto. Thus, Applicants respectfully request continued examination and allowance of the application.

Claims 23-28 and 31-37 are pending in this application.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 17-32 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Petillo, et al. (USPN 6,544,679). Claims 17-22 and 29-30 have been canceled. With respect to claims 23-28, 31, and 37, Applicant respectfully traverses because Petillo, et al. fails to disclose, teach, or suggest each of the claim limitations, in particular at least one series of second valve elements, wherein:

- each of said first valve elements comprises a peripheral ring disposed on a moving stem that is urged by a spring against a valve seat;

- each of said second valve elements comprises a peripheral ring disposed on a moving stem that is urged by a spring against a valve seat; and

- each one of said first valve elements corresponds to a respective one of said second valve elements such that when they are brought together the stem of the said one of said first valve elements abuts the stem of said respective one of said second valve elements to urge open each of said one of said first valve elements and said respective one of said second valve elements. Support for these newly added limitations may be found in the Drawings in FIG 2 and in the Specification at line 12 of page 7 through line 20 of page 9.

On the other hand, Petillo, et al. fails to disclose this specific structural relationship between the putative first set of valves and second set of valves. Additionally, Applicant kindly notes that the functional language objected to by the Examiner has now been replaced with explicitly recited structural language.

Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claims 33-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Petillo, et al. (6,544,679), as applied to claims 17-32 and 37 above, and in further view of Avis, et al. (US Pub. No. 2002/0189679). Applicant respectfully traverses because Petillo, et al. fails to disclose, teach, or suggest all of the claim limitations as explained above and because Avis, et al. fails to cure the deficiencies of Petillo, et al. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should the examiner believe a telephone call would expedite the prosecution of the application, he/she is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

A Petition for a One Month Extension of Time has been contemporaneously submitted with this Amendment along with the associated fee. Otherwise, it is believed that no other fee is due at this time. If that belief is incorrect, please debit deposit account number 01-1375. Also, the Commissioner is authorized to credit any overpayment to deposit account number 01-1375.

Respectfully submitted,

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